To Dr. James Sykes

Dr. Sir

Being aware of the many advantages,
I have derived, from your exemplary precepts,
in medicine. It gives me great satisfaction,
in thus, candidly acknowledging; the high es-
teem, I entertain, of your superior abilities,
and, at the same time, in subscribing myself
your most obedient, and affectionate pupil,

Parr an Taylor

On Dropsy

By dropsy, I mean, any preternatural collection of serous fluid, into any one or all of the cavities of the body, originating in general, or local debility, induced by previous morbid excitement; and, is, almost always, at the commencement, accompanied with preternatural action, in the arterial system. the evidence of which, is too well known, for me, to take up any time, in adducing the proofs, in favour of its existence.—

Dropsy is a disease, to which, all ages of human beings are subject. the indolent more so than those, who lead an active life. women are more so than men. it occurs most frequently in low marshy countries, where the intermittent fever mostly prevails, than in mountainous tracts of country. it is most apt to occur, in the spring, after a changeable winter, or in the autumn, succeeding to the diseases of that time. both women and men, are alike subject to

this disease; when, to a sedentary life, is added intemperance in the use of ardent spirit.

The morbid action in the blood resists, differs, in most instances, from that in common fevers, in being accompanied, with less febrile heat and with little or no pain in the head, ~~and~~ limbs. a circumstance, that I would attribute, to the arterial, or some one of the systems, being in a greater state of debility, in the center of the body, than those more distant, (Roy Thompson,) have, a greater disposition, to retain the morbid impression.—

When a transient stimulus is applied to the system, if it be not too powerfull, the effect will be, to destroy the excitability of the system for the time, at least, to the action of a weaker stimuli. but, when it is withdrawn, the powers of the system, appear to accumulate in such a manner, as to keep close at the heels of its retreat.— not so, when the force of impression is great, and long continued. the effect is to destroy

the capacity of the parts, in such a manner, as to become quite incapable, of making its former resistance, although, the force be withdrawn. in the first instance, it is like the tree, which bends to the impression of the wind, but rises again when the force is withdrawn, it does not lose its elasticity from so slight a cause. but in the latter instance, it is like a tree, which is shattered by the storm, it falls to rise no more, unless, by the aid of man, or some other cause, equally independant of nature.

The system in Dropsy, ~~in dropsy~~ is often reduced to this latter state, from the force of impression. it is this state, which characterises the Hydropic diathesis, and which is more immediately, the ~~subject~~ object of this Essay. and which, I shall term, in distinction from the acute state, the Chronic state, of Dropsy. and in those cases, where the system retains its power of re-acting, will constitute the acute state of this disease

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debility predisposes to dropsical effusion as it does to all other diseases. Dr Rush says, "that the healthy state of one system, depends on the healthy state of another. I think it equally true, that the diseased state of one, should depend on the diseased state of another, or, that the morbidly depressed state of one system, should depend, on the morbidly excited state of others,

I grant with Dr Cullen, that a diminished absorption of serous fluid, thrown into the interstices of the body, by a natural exhalation, might produce a dropsical swelling. It does not seem likely that the absorbents should be so deranged, when the exhalants, are in a healthy state, they being so intimately connected, by sympathy of continuity, that the same cause, that produced a debility in one, would likewise produce the debility of the other, it is very obvious to me, that a diminished absorption should be, co ex-

=istent, with an increased exhalation, and that, a laxity in the exhalants, should be the cause, of an increased exhalation. while the same circumstance, should, in the absorbents, be the cause of a diminished absorption. In short, Dropsy I conceive to be, as much the offspring of debility, as debility, is the offspring of morbid excitement; that this is true, I infer, from the causes which induce Dropsy, they being, all of a debilitating nature, from the action of morbid impressions. these are —

1st Obstruction of the Catamenia in females or any natural or customary evacuation — This is often the cause of any obstinate dropsies. it is to be observed that, this discharge, is seldom or ever present in this affection; the pernicious effects of a retension of this discharge, is well known, it is as much a disease as any other affection of the human body. The object of this discharge appears to be, to eliminate

from the body a portion of fluid, that has become superfluous or useless to the system- it no doubt contains more carbon, than any other portion of the blood in the system; consequently, must, if retained in the system, become a source of oppression. now, if from any cause, such as the taking of cold, this discharge be retained in the system; there is still a tendency in the system, to throw it off, in consequence of which, there is either great commotion excited in the system, such as fever, or from its gradual Operation the excitability becomes worn down, so that, the system will accommodate itself to its action, in the the first instance, it will in most cases, be ~~xx~~ located in the form of Pleurisy &c. in the latter, the arteries become the exclusive seat of the impression; or, it induces ~~xxxxx~~ congestion in some one of the viscera; thereby inducing local debility, the ultimate effect of which, is, to bring the whole system into-

sympathy with the part affected, and thus giving rise to dropsical effusions.— It appears, as if the arteries failed in such cases, of unloading themselves of this redundant matter, and of course, must become, the seat of the impression. Dr. Cullen, believes, that dropsy rarely occurs from such a cause, "he says" "a dropsy from such a cause, has been a rare occurrence, "and when it seems to have happened, I would suppose it owing to the same cause, as the suppression itself, rather than the plethora induced by it.— We find, that in dropsies from this cause, as well as in almost all others, that the functions of the stomach, are very much disordered. This, I conceive to be, as much the consequence of the primary derangement, that ushered in the disease, as debility in any other part of the body. Dr. Cullen thinks this to be, the efficient cause in the production of dropsy that succeeds to Chlorosis; in not preparing the aliment

in a sufficiently assimilated state, to furnish the the necessary quantity of red blood: but, still continuing to transmit the serous portion in abundance. — — — — — — — — — —

II Intermitting fevers, in common with other febrile affections. from what ever source intermittent fevers are derived, they have been long known to bring on this disease, and most commonly, in my opinion, originates from causes inducing local debility — as congestions, obstructions, &c. induced by the morbid impression, being concentrated in one particular part of the body, and very often to such a degree, as to depress the part, below the point of reaction: thereby inducing a chronic state of debility. — When watery effusions, take place from such local causes, the collection, will also be confined to a limited space. hence, the so frequent occurrence, of a collection of water in the abdomen-

succeeding to intermitting fevers. but from the long continued action of the cause, which first produced the local debility; universal debility will sooner or later come on; thus constituting the Hydropic diathesis: which is in almost every instance, attended with a genual effusion of water in the cellular texture. — " " " " — — — —

III Obstinate and protracted Catarrhal affections. the operation of this cause is not, any unlike that of intermittent fever. I am inclined to think, it to be more certain, in producing dropsy, in females, than males, in as much, as in them, it almost always, occasions, an obstruction of the catamenia, and probably at the same time, it induces a spasm on the surface of the body, thereby preventing, the escape of the insensible perspiration, which is partly evinced, from the dryness of the skin, that is observed in dropsies from such a cause —

the first effect appears to be, to induce local or general debility: thereby, deranging the natural sympathies of the system, and is frequently attended with excessive action in the blood vessels, which is mostly local.— That an increased exhalation may take place, by the arteries, ~~from~~ excessive action; I shall not deny: but we frequently see dropsical effusions, attended with very feeble action in the blood vessels.— I believe it to be no new thing, that debility may exist in one part, at the same time, that excessive action is present in another; now as, debility predespose to dropsy, as well as to excessive action; why should we not, consider them as Collateral circumstances, originating from the same cause? —

IV The intemperate use of ardent spirit, is allowed by all practical writers, to be frequently the cause of dropsy; its operation appears to be,

more general than any one of the preceding causes it acts on all the systems nearly alike; and is more speedy in its effects, when it is accompanied with indolence; and thus produces debility over the whole system: which disposes to dropsical effusions. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

V The venereal disease, frequently is, the cause of Dropsical effusions, its operation is that of a powerfull stimulus, prostrating the animal powers: I have seen one or two instances of dropsy from this; and I believe, when it shall have taken place, that all attempts to the cure are perfectly useless:- Dropsy not unfrequently succeeds to this disease, for some years after the symtoms of the venereal affection, have disappeared. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

VI Interruption to the return of the venous blood, Dr. Cullen supposes this to be, the most frequent cause

of dropsy. Dr Cullen say "that, this interruption, seems
"to operate, by resisting the free passage of the blood,
"from the arteries into the veins: thereby increasing
"the force of the arterial fluid into the exhalants,
"and consequently, the quantity of fluid they pour
"out; it may also depend, on tumours of various
"kinds, and from polypi, either in the veins, or in the ri-
=ght side of the heart; also, obstructions in the lungs,
"preventing the blood flowing freely from the right
"ventricle, and thereby, preventing the ventricle, from
"receiving its proper quantity of blood, from the
"cava". now, from all these causes, I can readily
conceive that a dropsy may be induced; - but,
the most frequent cause of dropsy, from an in-
=terruption of the venous blood; I conceive to be, either
an obstruction, or an enlargement of the liver -
in the first instance, the vena portarum would be
the seat ~~of the~~ of the impression; - but from an

enlargement of the liver, the vena cava, from its proximity with the liver, would be pressed on, and thereby disposing, more immediately to a universal dropsy;- by maturely considering the operation of this cause, in producing dropsy, it will not be found essentially different in its nature, from the causes I have mentioned; It appears essential to life, that venous blood should circulate through the lungs, whereby, it is deprived of a noxious, carbonaceous principle; which is well known to be pernicious in the extreme to animal life; if retained in the blood vessels.- this carbonaceous principle, I believe, to be as much the efficient cause in the production of morbid excitement;- as morbid excitement is, by its action, in the production of dropsy; its obvious effects &c, to debilitate the system, and to produce that livid complexion of the countenance, so invariably attending Hydropic patients;

particularly in Chlorosis.- That an insufficient oxygenation should induce this diathesis, I infer, not only from the cases above alluded to; but from cases of original malconformation in some of the vital organs, which have been known from dissection, to be insufficient for the complete oxygenation of the blood: Dr Wistar related a case which occurred in the Child of a Mr Warner of this City,- of a very extraordinary malconformation of the heart, in whom all the marks, of an insufficient oxygenation of the blood, existed in the greatest degree.— Dropsical swellings, are apt to occur in pregnant women, probably, occasioned by the pressure of the uterus, on the Vena cava ascendens, it generally occurs in the lower extremities,— I think it very possible, that by this Obstruction to the return of the venous blood, that the absorbent ducts, may thereby be prevented, in some measure, from emptying themselves pre-

:ly into the veins. It is required, that all the system, should be equally excited, to a certain degree, for health to continue. now from a want of tone, or contractility in the veins, the absorbents may prove deficient in their office, from a want of energy in the veins, to propel their contents forwards, so as, to make room to receive the fluid they absorb; hence it is most likely that the absorbents are affected when such causes operate.

VII Protracted and difficult labours, not unfrequently, are succeeded by dropsical effusions, from the debility that is induced, from such severe action in expelling the child; which debility, is either local or general, and disposes to local and general dropsies;- The effusion from this cause, occurs, without being preceded with any excess of action in the arterial system; the muscular fibre, becomes shattered, or so incapacitated,

as not to be capable of reacting; hence the rea=son why, from an erect posture during the day, that an accumulation of water, should take place in the inferior extremities; the parts are so relaxed and debilitated, as not to make any resistance, to the gravity of the fluid;—

VIII Schirrhi, have been considered as causeing dropsy; but I should doubt this, unless it is, when they are so large, as to compress, some neighbouring vein; thereby impeding the free circulation of the blood.— It has long been known, that they are to be found in the viscera of hydropic pateints. but, I should rather ascribe their origin, to the same cause that induced dropsy, than admit, that they are the cause of dropsy.— — — — — — — — —

As for the manner in which, large evacuations produce dropsy, I am at a loss, at this

ume to determine, Dr Sydenham supposed it to oper-
-ate, by debilitating the blood; nor do I believe, the
view I have taken of Dropsy, will permit me to ac-
-count for its operation in inducing this Disease.
I am much more inclined, to impute such an oc-
-currence, to the want of sufficient blood letting,
For, in all cases, where spontaneous hemorrhage oc-
-curs, it is to be presumed, that there is a morbid im-
-pression in some part of the system; which is some-
times only to be removed, by Copious blood letting;
even to fainting. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
Of Dropsy from the Tunica Hydatigena, I have
no Idea; the appearance which is generally
taken for Hydatides, I can only conceive, to be dilata
-tions of the lymphatic vessels with serum, from debil-
-ity and loss of tone in those vessels. — Ruysch found the
uterine placenta entirely changed into Hydatides.
There is often an effusion of water, from parts in a

state of inflammation as from the Pleura &c.

Dr Hale induced a dropsy in a Dog, by injecting warm water into the arteries, of a dog — this acted probably from its relaxing effect.

A General dropsy may, immediately arise from any of the several causes of Dropsy, which act more generally upon the system: and even when other species of dropsy, from particular circumstances, appear first, yet, when these proceed from any causes more generally affecting the system, a general dropsy sooner or later, comes always to be joined with them.

From the view I have taken of the causes inducing dropsy, I consider it to be the effect of morbid excitement, inducing debility in the arterial system, in most instances first; whereby they become prostrated below the power of reacting, in the part which is more the immediate seat of this impression. Hence they are no longer capable, of performing

their ordinary functions, with their usual vigour, and activity. The fluid they receive, is no longer converted into good blood, in consequence of their debility, the serous portion of which, transfuses through their paralytic exhalants, into the surrounding cavaties. - - - - - - - - - - -

The nature of the affected parts are all the same, they all originate from previous morbid excitement, and for the want of sufficient depletion in the first of the attack, to eradicate or disfuse the disease, in such a manner that all the systems might, alike participate in its effects, and thereby, rendering it more easily, eliminated from the system. - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Dropsy often alternates with other diseases, as apoplexy, Phthisis Pulmonalis, &c. it appears, that the same morbis impressis, that produced one, is also requisite to produce the other, only vary-

=ing in its effects, according as the impression is seated in parts, more or less essential to life.—

I do not believe, that excessive action in the arteries, is always an essential circumstance, in the production of that debility, which predisposes to Dropsy, debility in the blood Vessels, as in other systems, may be induced by the gradual operation of an exciting cause, such as noxious miasmatic exhalation, &c. in the same manner, that Hepatalgia, is produced in the west-indies, without being preceded by, either Hepatetis or Hepaticula.— — — — —

That particular disposition of the external parts of the body, which retains the impression of the finger, has been considered by some Physicians, as a distinct kind of Dropsy, and is termed by them Leucophlegmatia; for my part I can see no real reason, why such a distinction should be given to it, as it is only a grade of that

condition of the body, which disposes to dropsical effusion:- nor does it mark a period, at which we are to give tonic medicines; for I have observed, a great degree of action in the arterial system, though the skin was perfectly cold, this action appeared somewhat local.- - - - - -

It is a thing very extraordinary, in most other diseases except dropsy, that excessive action in the arterial system, should elevate such a trifling degree of heat, as it does, in the stage I have just been speaking of;- it is a circumstance, which I should not know how to account for, unless it is, from the dissolution of the natural sympathy between the arteries and muscles, the latter, becoming so inert, as to refuse to chime with the blood vessels, or to transmit the heat they generate, as when in an active and healthy state.-

Having in a preceding section, spoken of carbon

as the efficient agent in inducing morbid excitement, it will naturally occur, that in proportion to the quantum of this principle present, there will be in the system a corresponding increase portion of excitability; - now in every case of Dropsy, it appears, that the blood is either defective in point of oxygenation, or excessive in the quantity of carbonaceous principle it contains, the obvious effect of which is, to produce that livid paleness that originates in general, from the action of morbid stimuli. - It is a circumstance well known, that there must be a portion of oxygen in the atmosphere we inhale, or the system soon looses its power of reacting - it is also well known, that reaction depends on excitability, and that health depends upon an equable and due proportion of excitability, diffused through the general system; now from these circumstances, and from the invigorating effects of oxygen, when taken into the lungs, we may infer, that oxygen

is the principle of excitability, as excitability is the principle of life:— It follows, that the indications of cure must be, to abstract stemuli when in excess, or to restore tone when deficient;— but the attempts to fulfill the latter, is often ineffectual, in the last stage of this disease:. For as I before stated, that the force of impression is so great in many instances, as to destroy the constitution of the fibre, in such a manner, as for the incapable of having excitability imparted to it, even by the powerfule tonic of Mercury.— The operation of the causes what ever they be, that induce that debility, which disposes to dropsical effusions, appear to fact like strokes from the same weapon, only differing in their force of impression. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

The premonitory symtoms are, 1st a livid complexion, 2d loss of appetite, 3d thirst, and 4th lassitude, all of which are strong indications of the existence

of morbid stimuli in the system; to these succeed a swelling of the lower extremities, appearing at night, and disappearing in the morning. — — — —

The Symptoms when the Disease is formed, are, 1 a difficulty of breathing, occasioned by the pressure of the water on the diaphragm, 2d thirst, Dr Cullen thinks this owing to an abstraction of fluid from the fauces, Dr Sydenham says, it is caused by the putrefaction of the lymph, which by its long continuance in the body, grows hot and acrimonious, and occasions a kind of continued fever & thirst, — to this opinion I can readily acquiesce; but, to render the thing more intelligible, I shall say, that it is the effect and is always an evidence of morbid excitement in some part of the body, 3 a scarcity of urine, owing to the serous portion of the blood, escaping into the cavities of the system. — — — —

The appearance of the water when discharged, is various in dif

ferent subjects, sometimes bloody, green, brown, and is observed by Van Swieten, to differ in its appearance in the same subject, at different tappings. In the advanced stage of this disease, it is often found of a thick gelatinous consistence, so much so, as not to run out at the aperture made by the trocar. Dr Physick mentioned, that he had seen this in two patients. — hence, the Physician's safest way seems to be, to affirm nothing certain concerning the nature of this fluid, before the operation is performed. The existence of this disease may be ascertained, when in the abdomen, by a fluctuation, observed by placing your left hand on one side of the patients abdomen, and gently striking on the other side, with your right hand. —

Tympanites is the most likely disease with which Ascites is most likely to be confounded, — it differs from it, in emitting a sounding noise when struck with the hand, Tumours in the abdomen, may be mistaken for dropsy of the abdomen; but I presume, they may be distinguished, by there emit

ing no sound or fluctuation, when struck with the hand; the existence of tumours, also often discovered by the touch.

A suffusion of air ~~[illegible]~~ in the cellular texture may be mistaken for an incipient dropsy, - but I believe, that they may never be mistaken for each other, if the the disease that preceded them be taken into consideration, a suffusion of air, generally succeeds to wound of the Chest, while dropsy, is often a long time in coming on. In a suffusion of air the part ~~[illegible]~~ become more elastic. in Dropsy this quality is absent. - - - - - - - - -

Having thus spoken of the several causes, and nature, of dropsy, as well, as my time will permit; I shall proceed to mention the remedies, for the cure of of this disease. - These I shall divide into such, as are proper for the acute state, and into such, as are proper for the chronic state of dropsy. - by this division, I mean to convey no other Idea, than, what is understood by the Tonic & atonic state; deeming it unnecessary, to take any notice of the numerous

distinctions, that were adopted, by our ancestors in in medicine, as purgatory, and unavailing, and which, have only tended to embarass the progress of our healing art. and 5th. of Blood letting, in recommending this remedy in the cure of dropsy, I do not feel myself under any necessity of apologising for its use, as it has been so ably defended by a practitioner of great experience, accompanied with so many unequivocal proofs of its efficacy, in the cure of this disease. Although a full and tense pulse is always an indication of the necessity of bleeding; yet I can easily conceive with Dr. Rush, that there may be such congestion, and such a degree of stimulus, to the arterial system, as to produce a depressed pulse, in which case it will be highly indicated. but when we are suspicious, of a depressed state of the pulse, it would be well to draw blood sparingly at first, should the pulse increase in fullness or frequency, it will warrant a repetition. It acts by abstracting excitement, thereby rendering the system unsusceptible

the seat of the disease, in a minus state of excitement, which disposes them to attract, and diffuse through the system, that which is local; this remedy is to be persisted in, as long as the strength of the patient will permit, should we have reason to believe, that there exist any congestions; and at the same time we should have regard to the constitution, ~~of~~ the strength, to know whether, ~~the~~ it be not too much exhausted.

Though aware of the many advantages to be derived from this remedy, yet, we are often debarred from its use, in consequence of the objections made to it by the friends of the patient. They behold the pallid features of their friend, and conceive that nothing will be of service, but such remedies as they call strengthening. In a country of so much ignorance and stupidity, a young Practitioner is often debarred from its use, for fear of being stigmatized with the reproach, of having destroyed his patient. — — —

II Vomits, these act by abstracting excitement from the arterial system, thereby rendering the lymphatics more

sensible, to the impression of the distending fluid, consequently, disposing them to a greater absorption of that fluid. They prepare the system for the exhibition of Tonic medicines. They agitate the body, and thereby open the sluices of the st. vess. They lessen the action of the pulse, no doubt, by the debility they induce in the stomach, and thereby attract morbid excitement from the blood vessels. Dr Sydenham thinks, that Vomits are not good, unless the swelling be great; in this case, he thinks, purges are better to be relied on. Vomits if long continued are apt to excite hysteric symptoms. Mr Dr Cullen says, that they should be of the strong antimonials, and repeated after short intervals. — — — — — —

III Purges these act, by diminishing the action of the arterial system, and thereby promote the absorption, and discharge of water, Dr Cullen thinks they are better than Vomits, for the discharge of water, Dr Sydenham recommends the use of purges in dropsies, he says "that cathartics, that are slow in their operation, [illegible] as the system

to no purpose, - to be usefull, they should be hydragogue, and pass through the intestines speedily. If they are too violent, opium will easily restrain them; they must be repeated daily, unless a day of rest is absolutely needfull, because says the Dr, by intermission the water would collect again. - Dr Barton is of the opinion that purges have a specific operation, - it would be unnecessary for me to go into a detail of them here, if it were in my power. but it appears, that there are purges better adapted to the cure of dropsy, than others, the purgatives that I should recommend are, Calomel, Jalap, Cream of Tartar, salphate of soda & potash, podophyllum, and the phosphate of soda, all of which, act by stimulating the intestines to increased secretion, and at the same time, do not possess any heating quality. they are of different force, and will thereby be accomodated to different constitutions, Dr Sydenham thinks, great attention should be paid to the patients constitution, and purges adapted to their nature -, to people

of irritable bowells, he gave an ounce of Syrup of buckthorn every morning.— The modus operandi of the purges I have mentioned, except the Jalap and podophylum, I would ascribe, to their imparting excitability to the stomach and bowells, by the oxygen they contain, whereby the contents of the alimentary canal becomes a direct irritant, by which they are excited into action, Dr Rush makes mention, of two cases that were cured by taking a spoonfull of sweet oil twice a day.

IV Sea Bathing, this I think would be a good remedy in dropsy of an inflammatory nature, especially, when the patient had to go some distance to the place of bathing, this from the action of the body, with pure air, would enable it, to convert any excess of stimuli, that might be in the system into excitement, while the bathing would abstract it.— to this add

V Low diet, this by preventing an addition of stimuli, would enable the system to manufacture, if I may be allowed the expression, the portion that is purulent, by which means,

the fibres would regain their usual vigour and activity.

VI Fasting this upon the same principle, promises to be a very good remedy, Dr Rush relates several very interesting accounts of its efficacy. ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

VII Fear, this from its sedative effect, has been observed, to be of great utility in dropsy, in promoting the the urinary discharge. I was told by a graduate in this university, that while he was before the professors, undergoing his examination, his fear of being rejected was so great, that it was with the greatest difficulty, he could retain his urine. ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

VIII Diuretics, of this class of medicine I have very little experience, the term applied to medicines, which excite the urinary secretion, must be of a relative nature, as there are no medicine, that will excite the urinary secretion in every state of disease, hence they are to be found in almost every class of medicines. Dr. Sydenham placed his chief dependance on the lexivial salts, which he considered as

the most efficacious of all the diuretics. Dr Cullen, as a diuretic, gave a large portion of common water, which he highly approves of, he also thinks, that the diuretic effect of cream of Tartar is increased, by giving with it, a large portion of watery fluid. whenever thirst exist, the taking in of cold water, is likely to be of service, when combined with the depleting plan, for as I mentioned before, thirst is is indicative of morbid excitement in some part of the system, and large draughts of cold water is calculated to dilute this morbid stimuli, and thereby to shield the arteries from its action, at the same time, from its coldness, it abstracts excitement, and thereby, enables the arteries to throw their contents on the kidneys. pure water should be used for this purpose, and probably, if it were acidulated with cream of Tartar, it would be more serviceable. the schuylkill water should be preferred, to that of the city, in as much, as I believe it to be in a higher state of oxygenation, for I believe, oxygen to be an antidote to morbid ~~excitement~~ stimuli,

it enables the system to react, whereby the disease is soon roused from a dormant state into the view of the Lancet, nature cries aloud, when she is oppressed with stimuli, for acescent and cool articles of drink, to wash away, if I may use the expression, morbid excitement, but to return, Hoffman as a diuretic, depended principally on squills and nitre, Dr Wyatt was fond of tartarised alkali, which he gave in doses of about a half an ounce.- agreeably to Dr Ferrian experiments, in the cure of dropsy, we find that of 43 patients, 33 were cured by cream of Tartar, whereas, out of 29 cases, only 11 were cured by digitalis, Dr Ferrian, gradually increas his dose of Tartar, from two to twelve drams, the Dr found, that the more brisk the operation of the tartar as a cathartic, the more copious was the flow of urine, Cream of Tartar and Nitre, alike claims our attention as refrigerants, and, from their debilitating effects in the stomach, may act in a manner, by diverting morbid excitement,-

Dr Rush says, he cured 2 cases of ascites, and one of anasarca, by nitre, in the latter case in substance. his mode of giving it is, to dissolve 2oz of Nitre in a pint of water, to be given in the dose of a wine glass full 3 times a day; he directs, that it should be given in small doses at first, and should always be laid aside, if it should prove ineffectual after having been given for 2 or 3 weeks. Digitalis has been strongly recommended by Dr Withering, who had given it in ~~163~~ cases, and in many with advantage, but as in the hands of Dr Ferriar, it claims only eleven cases out of 29, in which it was fairly tried, we have little reason to expect great things from it in Dropsy. I have seen it given in one case, with the effect of relieving some hysteric symtoms, and procuring sleep. but I do not think that medecine of such doubtfull efficacy ought to be administered. Why should Physicians spend whole weeks, very often, in fruitless efforts, to procure a pint or two of urine, when at the same time they are omitting the ground

Object, and in all probability, they are hastening the constitution of their patients to destruction. I make no doubt, but, that bread [illegible] and cold water taken two or three times a day, and at the same time, to refrain from all other food as long as possible, would Claim as much respect as a diuretic, as digitalis, Squill has been much recommended, in dropsy as a diuretic, it is used in combination with Ipecacuanha, and nitre, in doses of half a gr. of squill to ½ gr. ipecacuanha, two or three times a day, - or 3 of squill & 6 of nitre. gr.

IX Blisters, if the pulse be reduced, and the parts have not lost their tone, to a great degree, so that the sympathy be not destroyed, blisters will be useful, by diverting morbid excitement. but in cases of extreme debility, where the external parts have lost their tone, the sympathy thereby destroyed, - blisters will in my opinion, be of little service, their operation can not extend far, and moreover, the parts are apt to take

on mortification from the slightest abrasion of the skin. – – – – – – – – – – – –

X Diaphoretics, a diaphoresis when induced by exercise, I believe to be salutary – but it never should be excited by internal means, unless it is by nauseating medicines, as there are other much more certain modes of depleting the system, I am inclined to think, that sweats excited by external means, to be much more safe, such as by the application of bottles of hot water, to the patient while wrapped in Blankets. Dampier in his voyages, relates, that one of his men having a dropsy, was buried up to the neck in hot sand, which brought on a strong sweat and cured him. – – – – – – –

I now finish the history of the remedies for the acute state of dropsy, it yet remains to determine one very important question, before I enter on our other indication, and that is, to what period, or what are the

signs, by which we are to know, when we shall have gone far enough with this class of remedies, shall we be guided by the pulse, or by the evacuation of the water, or the cessation of thirst, or an increase of appetite, it appears to be a difficult question to determine.

The evacuation of the water, by the remedies that have been mentioned, I do not think, ought to be held in view as the primary object of the cure; remove the exciting cause, and nature in most instances with the help of Tonics, will evacuate the water, - hence the efficacy of purges & vomits, by being persisted in, until the water has been completely evacuated, the exciting cause has been removed, and by the use of roborants, the proximate cause is removed, - which is debility either local or General.

We will now suppose, that the exciting cause is removed, we must then have recourse to Tonics, and from their effects, we may Judge whether we have

used them prematurely or not, and first of

1st Bitter, aromatic, & astringent substances, exhibited in substance, or in infusions of wine, spirit, or beer, Dr Sydenham put great dependance in a diet drink of this nature. ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

II Certain vegetables. such as scurvy grass, horse raddish, mustard, water cresses, and garlic, Dr Rush mentions, that he knew an old man, who was perfectly cured of an anasarca by eating water cresses on bread and butter. ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

IV The metallic Tonics, here we have Chalybeates of all kinds, - the mild preparations of copper & mercury, the metallic oxids appear to be the vehicle of oxygen, and are best adapted to this state of the system, inasmuch as the greater part of them pervade the system, and thereby diffuse excitability to every part, ~~of the~~ white those that act by sympathy, could have no such effect, as the sympathy of the systems destroyed,

and therefore, the part would refuse to transmit its impression, to a distant part of the body, the first is. Mercury, and its preparations afford us the most powerful of all Tonics - from its extreme tenuity, it pervades the whole system, by which means, it excites its torpid vessels, it deobstructs the vessels from one viscus to another, by imparting tone to them vessels, whereby they become capable of unloading themselves, of all putrid and stagnant fluid, the parts then, become capable of transmitting impressions, and thereby establishing equable excitement to all the systems. It appears, that mercury imparts its efficacy in a greater degree to small vessels than to large ones, probably, from its being retained a longer time in small vessels, as it can not pass through them so readily, hence its operation so specifically on the Glands, - but we should be cautious, in not pushing the mercury further that just to excite a gentle salivation, for like all other medicines of this nature, it induces a morbid degree of irritability, which should

* The preparations of Iron that are most commonly used are the Chalybeate wine — the Sulphate of Iron in the dose of from 3 to 5 grs 2 or 3 times a day I have used with advantage — a powder compound of bark, ginger, & subsulphate of equal parts in the dose of 10 to 15 grs 2 or 3 times a day is a powerful tonic — Cider, in which a piece of Iron is put is said to have done great things in this disease

be obviated by opiates, or what appears to me to be as good, the bark to be exhibited at the same time with the mercury, it would in a manner confirm the tonic effects of the mercury, — — — — — — — — —

2 Iron & its oxid, both appear to be efficacious in this state of the system, but not in so great a degree as mercury, yet more esteemed as it is more manageable, — — —

3 The oxid of bismuth has been highly spoken of as a tonic

4 copper and the preparation of which are mostly used of any, in dropsy, particularly the cuprum ammoniacum

4 the oxid of arsenic, and its solution, — — — —

V The mineral acids, with the bark & wine, to which add

VI a mild but cordial diet, — nothing ought to be taken in the stomach, which would require much exertion to digest it, as the digestive powers are weak, and aboveall

VII exercise, to what ever degree the patients strength will permit, that of swinging and riding in a carriage, are most proper in the lowest stage of this disease, Horse-

back, Dr Rush thinks a Journey to be preferable, where the patients strength will permit. The efficacy of this remedy, has long been known to Physicians, by experience all medical practitioners have been convinced, that health and vigour depends in a great measure upon the air we breathe; but no one, till Dr. Crawford wrote upon the subject, was ever able to explain, what the air contributed towards health and life. They had observed that the blood acquires a florid colour, by passing through the lungs, precisely as when venal blood is exposed to the open air; exercise is suited to assist in every function of the animal economy. Particularly says Dr Cullen, to promote perspiration, and thereby, to prevent the accumulation of watery fluid in the body. the share in which the exercise of the muscles has in promoting the motion of the venous blood, induces me says Dr C, to think, that bodily exercise, to what ever degree the

patient can bear it, will always be the most useful. Exercise increases respiration, and promotes the oxygenation of the blood, and by this it gives vigour to the system, and excites the action of the absorbents. It is the circulation of the blood, which distributes vital energy to every part of the body, for in syncope, and even in death, when it is a consequence of suffocation, all the vital organs remain perfect and entire: but for the want of distribution of vital energy, by the circulation of blood, neither the heart, the lungs, the stomach, nor the brain, can perform their office. Their is neither secretion nor excretion, and all action both vital and voluntary ceases. In those wasting diseases, in which the circulation of the blood is languid, in vain will you pour in nutriment, unless at the same time by air, by exercise, and proper medicines, you promote the circulation, and consequently the secretion, with the vital energy of the absorbents.

VIII Friction, this is no doubt a good remedy in this disease, Dr Cullen says, that it should be used in the morning, and that it ought to be made from below upward only, with warm and dry flannells; this if persisted in, may serve as a substitute for exercise as it accelerates the motion of the blood.

IX Bandages, by pressure, assist weak vessels, and promotes absorption.- - -

X The cold bath. does not promise to be of much service in this stage of dropsy, unless it is accompanied with tonics, it may serve to awaken the sympathy of the system.

XI a recumbent posture in the intervals of exercise, when the disease is seated in the lower extremity.-

XII Punctures in the legs and feet. Dr Rush directs they should be made with a lancet. Dr Cullen thinks pea issues to have been of service.- - - - - -

XIII opium has been recommended, but I do not believe it to be of much service, unless it is to allay nervous symptoms

or to restrain the operation of mercury, the various vehicles already recommended, will serve as direct stimulants, and with less injury than opium, upon the same principle I should forbid the free use of ardent spirit, as they alike exhaust the powers of the system — and lastly

Tapping, this ought to be resorted to, if the water is not evacuated by other means, especially in the latter stage, when depleting remedies would be inadmissible by removing the stimulus of distention the absorbents become more excitable to the action of medicines — —

It appears, that any thing very nourishing should be avoided in this disease, at least until the latter stage, when we have reason to believe, that nature has resumed her empire, for the system being in a stricture state, the object is not as it would be in a laxum state, where all that would be necessary, would be, to give nourishment or stimuli by degrees, but in this state of dropsy, the object is to restore tone and elasticity to the animal fibres, where

by, it becomes capable of receiving nourishment with ad-
-vantage: It is a thing admitted, that all nourishment
contains hydrogen or carbon, and that the oxygen we in-
-hale appears essential to the support of the vital energy,
for when the air, in which combustion is taking place is ex-
-hausted of its oxygen, the flame is extinguished, so it is
with animal life. - When hydrogen is in excess they both
languish, but when oxygen & hydrogen are in due proportion, they
both sparkle with vigour. Hence it may be inferred,
that hydrogen & oxygen, are as essential to the support
of animal life, as they are to the support of combustion;
during the course of the circulation, the chemical operations
are continued, and new combinations incessantly take
place, of this, one of the most remarkable is, that in
which the lungs assist, by the plentifull supply of ox
-ygen as the universal pabulum of life and flame, whilst they
emit the superabundante carbon and hydrogen, which unite
with caloric & oxygen, escape in the form of air, and water,

this, the Stomach is constantly providing the inflammable principle, whilst the lungs are incessantly contributing what is wanting to feed the vital flame. — —

I thus conclude the history and treatment of dropsy, but have to lament, that all the remedies we are in possession of, often prove inadequate to the cure of this disease. shall we attribute our want of success to the scarcity or want of a remedy, here I believe with the Illustrious Sydenham, that our want of success, is more to be attributed to a want of knowledge in the administration, than to a want of a suitable remedy, or one that we have not discovered; but there yet remains one remedy to be mentioned as a preventive and that is temperance and proper exercise combined. — — —

Knowing that haste is productive of error, it is not without embarassment I submit this essay to your considerations, when taking into view the short time I have had in composing it, yet trusting that you will —

pardon those errors, which from a more mature
deliberation, I should be able to correct myself.
But to stop here, without acknowledging the ardour
you have all evinced to impart useful knowledge
to ~~the~~ common with the class, would be the greatest
ingratitude — your familiarity, correctness, pati-
ence, and zeal, in conducting the lectures, together
with abilities, have all conspired, in rendering the
science we study, of greater value. —

I am Gentlemen

your most Obedient

and very humble Servant

Parran Taylor

of Dover Delaware